

The Association of Retired Faculty and Professional Staff

# Emeritus News

Winter 2022

## ► My Corner

By Barbara Mallette

*"Nettles make the best greens, but have little tiny hairs on them that sting you all over when you're picking. Me and Granpa many times failed to notice a nettle patch, but Granma would find it and we would pick them. Granpa said he had never knowed anything in life that, being pleasurable, didn't have a damn catch to it—somewhere. Which is right."*

Forrest Carter (*The Education of Little Tree*, 1976, p.100)



Granpa Wales got it right! Everything pleasurable has a catch somewhere, like the stinging hairs on a nettle plant. Pretty to look at, painful to touch. I have made it no secret that I loved teaching at the University. And that I would do just about anything for Fredonia. Perhaps I should have been quieter about my passion for teaching and supporting the University. I now find myself teaching two sections

of a face-to-face literacy methods course and an online graduate literacy course. Granpa was right! Teaching continues to fulfill a lifelong calling. BUT the grading!!! Even ten years of retirement couldn't erase the angst involved in grading. And the time spent in front of the laptop seems endless: editing works, learning new technology, creating class activities, and just being there for students who have experienced what I call "interrupted learning" due to the pandemonic and a change of instructor one-third of the way through the semester.

I hope my students are learning critical literacy theories and concepts as well as strategies useful in inclusive classrooms. I know that I am learning from them every class meeting. Only two students caught onto my reference to Mr. Ed (the talking horse) when I demonstrated how he would count to Wilbur. Even their parents weren't born when *Georgie the Ghost* book was written in 1963, which made me realized I must be as old as their grandparents. I thought everyone loved pizza. But I learned that one student doesn't like pizza with red sauce nor does she like pesto. A first for me! When someone is absent, a classmate often Zooms the class so I try to be on my best behavior (another first for me!). My students are generally tech savvy and they showed me how to display two documents simultaneously on the classroom's computer. But some days I have them put

their computers and cellphones down and we interact with each other. They have learned that I ask a lot of questions and they cannot hide. I learned that Lily, Olivia and Julia are popular names; it seems like there are 3 Lilys, 6 Olivias, and 10 Julias in my classes. I learned that there is plenty of parking in front of Thompson Hall at 7:25 in the morning. I learned that midterm grades are still submitted through Your Connection and that Starfish is a new monitoring system in which instructors can send kudos to students on track, and can alert students about any concerns including attendance and performance. I learned that the screen in the classroom has a long string for us short people (Thanks Colin!) and that if activated, will slowly retract. I learned that students miss Tim Hortons on campus. My students have learned that I don't support beginning sentences with "It," "This," and "There." I learned that Fredonia has a strong enough draw to attract some students from New York City and Long Island communities. The students come with some form of liquid, be it water, coffee, lemonade, or a power drink; now it appears that pumpkin spice latte is the latest favorite. I have learned that E120 Thompson is small and heats up quickly; somedays we are in a sauna. The students have learned that I walk around frequently. And I learned that I can still get between the rows in a small classroom in Thompson Hall!

As you can expect, some tasks in the Mallette-Lloyd household are on hold. I can say "I'm teaching" as an excuse to let dusting ride and put off mopping the floor. But I take time on dry days to help Doug chip away at our Fall Chore List. No gremlins come at night to rake leaves or cut perennials back. So, we work for a few hours and then put our feet up to enjoy the late afternoon sun through the oak tree. Life is good! But Granpa was still right!

*"If you don't love what you do, you won't do it with much conviction or passion."*

- Mia Hamm

Please email Dawn Hunt at [dawn.hunt@fredonia.edu](mailto:dawn.hunt@fredonia.edu) or call 716-673-3456 if you are interested in receiving the Emeritus newsletter by email.



PRESIDENT STEPHEN H. KOLISON JR.,  
CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO ATTEND A

# HOLIDAY GATHERING

Thursday, December 8, 2022

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Williams Center, MPR

Please stop by to enjoy some holiday refreshments, and mingle with colleagues, students, and emeritus members.

Please email [dawn.hunt@fredonia.edu](mailto:dawn.hunt@fredonia.edu) or call 716-673-3456 if you plan to attend.



## ► Emeritus Spotlight—Sandra Lewis

By Barbara Mallette

*"If we cannot now end our differences,  
at least we can help make the world safer for diversity."*

- John F. Kennedy



She calls herself a Packers fan but not a "cheesehead." Sandra Lewis is a Milwaukeean by birth. Her childhood was spent in the city and much of her education was completed within Milwaukee's borders. Sandra is the middle child of her family; she has an older brother and sister, and two younger brothers. She recalled that her mother moved from her grandparents' house to her father's house, as was customary in the 1950s. Mrs. Brown was a natural homemaker and thrived taking care of her three elder children while Mr. Brown served in the Army. The family maintained the status quo while dad was stationed in Germany. When he returned stateside, the Brown family grew, with the birth of Sandra's younger brothers. Life in Milwaukee was good and the Browns were happy to be together again. Happiness was cut short when Mr. Brown was killed in a car accident. The family's future seemed uncertain... Mrs. Brown had never worked outside the home, didn't have a license to drive, and was raising five young children, the youngest a babe in arms. Sandra talks about this time with melancholic pride. Her mom was a widow in her late 20s but demonstrated both grit and resourcefulness. Mr. Brown had the foresight to own life insurance; Mrs. Brown put these funds to good use. Taking care of her children and their education was Mrs. Brown's top priorities. She researched houses for sale that would accommodate her passel of children, would be walking distance to her children's elementary and middle schools, and would be walking distance to the grocery store, pharmacy, and library (proximity to the library was important to Mrs. Brown). In her search for adequate housing, Mrs. Brown looked for a house that was also near a park and near a convenience store. Sandra remembered that her childhood home met all of these conditions. She talked about the convenience store that was down the block; she didn't even have to cross the street to go there. And Sandra spoke with fondness about the park near her home. The oak tree in the park was the boundary as to how far Sandra could wander from home. Mrs. Brown could see Sandra and the other children playing in the park from her kitchen window.

Sandra attended neighborhood elementary and middle schools, and Pius IX High School. She began to take piano lessons as an eight-year-old; interesting note; her piano teacher also taught Sandra's mother and aunt when they were children. Sandra loved the piano and played faithfully through her teens. She was a student at the Wisconsin Conservatory and the first African American in the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra. Her piano teacher thought that Sandra should extend her music skills by taking up the violin. Although Sandra followed the teacher's advice, the violin just didn't approach her love for the piano.

When Sandra's youngest brother was enrolled in school on a full-time basis, Mrs. Brown secured her first job, working in the school district. Sandra spoke of her mother's habit of popping into classrooms to check on her children. Although an extremely compliant student, Sandra remembered her mother coming into Sandra's classroom and witnessing her sassing the teacher. She talked about how she was nervous all day as she awaited punishment for her behavior after seeing the look on her mother's face when she left Sandra's classroom. Much to Sandra's surprise, no spanking was delivered when she returned home that day. Rather, her mother's words seemed worse than being spanked; Sandra knew she never wanted to be in a situation like that again.

Sandra graduated from high school at 16 years of age; she and her older sister graduated together, which sometimes aggravated her sibling. She wanted to pursue music at the college level but Mrs. Brown couldn't support Sandra leaving home for Madison at 16. Sandra applied to a number of local universities in other programs but was told that she was too young to pursue college studies. Sandra was crestfallen about her plight. Mrs. Brown realized that her daughter had potential and needed to pursue her dream of higher education. Sandra's mother met with the Dean at Marquette University to discuss her daughter's application and to advocate for admission. The Dean listened to tales of Sandra's academic prowess and work-school activities. No arm twisting was needed and Mrs. Brown reported to Sandra, "You're in!" Sandra enrolled in the Marquette's Mathematics Program and became absorbed in its beauty. She found the symbolism of mathematics intriguing. Although math challenged her, she found immense satisfaction in its patterns, solutions, and proofs. Her voice became animated when she described the joy of problems that have more than one path to solution. Being immersed in mathematics is "like learning a new language. I just love an integral."

After graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics, Sandra was hired in Marquette's computer lab. Sandra learned that Marquette employees could take courses for free. Because she worked on campus, Sandra took advantage of this employee perk and enrolled in graduate courses in Mathematical Statistics. Sandra found working in the computer lab satisfying until a male coworker shared that he asked the Director for a raise and received it. Knowing her work was considered exemplary, Sandra pursued getting a raise for herself. Much to her surprise, the Director seemed to adhere to dated "old school" perceptions of women in the workforce, asking Sandra "Don't you want to get married and have children?" His statement "Men are bread winners" was most damning, as the Director failed to recognize that Sandra was her own breadwinner as a single woman. Immediately, Sandra combed the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in pursuit of a position at some other institute of higher education. An opening at Fredonia State caught Sandra's eye. She applied and was flown in for an interview. After spending two days with Fred Ullman and Bruce Wilger, Sandra was pleasantly surprised by the warmth of people she met.

*"I'm no longer accepting the things I cannot change...  
I'm changing the things I cannot accept."*

- Angela Davis

## ► Emeritus Spotlight *continued*—Sandra Lewis

Sandra spent an extra day wandering around Fredonia to get a sense of the area. She was impressed by the diversity on campus and in the community. When she stopped for a beer at Coughlin's, she met two African American men who sang the praise of the area. Sandra liked the small town feel of Fredonia and accepted the college's offer as Coordinator of Academic User Services in the Computer Center. After one month on the job, Sandra realized that Fredonia didn't 'seem as diverse as she first thought. Sandra asked her colleague Bruce, "Where are the Black people?" as they were in town when she interviewed. Little did she realize that the Blacks she met on campus and in the community were Buffalo Bills; she didn't know that the Bills' training camp was at Fredonia.



Early in her tenure at Fredonia, Sandra seemed to have an admirer back in Milwaukee at Marquette who regularly sent her flowers and candy. Christopher Lewis was this admirer and soon he joined Sandra in Fredonia; he was hired at the college soon after his arrival. Although Christopher's doctorate is in philosophy, his dissertation focused on artificial intelligence and Aristotle's categories. Computers were the first connection in Sandra and Chris's relationship. The Lewises have been together for 38 years; looks like the flowers and candy sent Sandra paid off!

When Sandra left Milwaukee for Fredonia, she predicted to her mother that she would be back in three years. Well, a return never happened. Sandra established a small group of friends who helped her adjust to village living where she felt safe, loved, and happy. She spoke of her positions at Fredonia with pride and appreciation, emphasizing that Fred Ullman and her colleagues in IT appreciated her intellect and her professionalism. Sandra's various campus positions have afforded her the opportunity to work with "a plethora of awesome people." Sandra Lewis has left her mark on Fredonia. We all worked with Sandra in her role as the Diversity Officer; she guided us through numerous faculty and professional searches. Her varied roles in *Upward Bound*, the Black Student Union, Faculty Senate, the Mathematics Department, professional development, and computer usage and software application workshops touched all of us.



Currently, Sandra is campaigning for the New York State Assembly. She reported that when Michael Bobseine approached Sandra about running for office, she needed no convincing. Sandra has always been interested in politics. She related that the notion of being part of "we the people, by the people" governing satisfies an urge to give back to the community and make a difference, particularly regarding Chautauqua County's economic development efforts, affordable housing, and mental health accessibility. Retirement has helped Sandra realize that she shouldn't put off what she wants to do. Sandra reiterated that running for office gets her to reflect that "I can be how I am. I can respect other people's choices. Maybe if more people are kind and respectful then we wouldn't have the stigma of politicians."

Retirement has been a new phase for Sandra Lewis. She is thankful to reach retirement "with good health and the satisfaction that I did my professional best throughout my career." Sandra remains active on a member of campus and community groups; namely, Summer *Upward Bound* teaching, Juneteenth Celebration Committee, Fredonia's EAP Committee, UUP's Solidarity Committee, and the Chautauqua County's 2022-23 Redistricting Committee. She continues playing piano and one day hopes to offer free piano lessons. What little free time she has, Sandra quilts, drawn to the mathematics in quilt patterns. Her quilts have been known to include African fabrics and mathematical shapes. You may recall that Sandra spearheaded the Campus Diversity Quilt that was displayed in Reed Library. Time is squeezed out for Scrabble and Sip & Paint experiences. If Sandra could sum up retirement in a single word, she would say "liberating."

*"We may have all come on different ships,  
but we're in the same boat now."*

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

### Informational Website

Retired Public Employees Association –  
<https://rpea.org/> - Sign up for informational emails and RPEA newsletters.

## ► Additional Information

- Join the campus for Mrs. Kathleen Wiant's presentation on the Dangers of Hazing on November 15<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. Mrs. Wiant's son died from fraternity hazing at Ohio University in 2018; she now speaks on her effort to lobby for anti-hazing legislation. This event is free but an RSVP is preferred. Complete the reservation form online <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdeod8ZUp1HVlRv-FdVR5iZKx2OhRDDvJTXedLeRn04hWd4UQ/viewform>, email Mark Suida, or call 716-673-3143 by November 11<sup>th</sup>
- Contribute to Freddy's Locker that distributes food and individual care items to Fredonia students. Non-perishable foods are needed (peanut butter, jelly, pasta sauce, canned vegetable, canned tuna, macaroni & cheese, oatmeal, canned soup, cereal granola bars). Also needed are individual care items including deodorant, toothpaste and brushes, toilet paper, feminine hygiene products, body wash, shampoo and conditioner. Contributions are accepted at Campus Life (G112 Williams Center) or the Welcome Center (G120 Williams Center) during regular building hours: 8 am - 10 pm Monday through Friday, 9 am - 10 pm Saturday, and noon -10 pm Sunday.

## ► In Memoriam of Campus Employees

Mr. William (Bill) M. Paige passed away on Sunday, September 25, 2022.

Mr. Paige served the State University of New York at Fredonia in the Structural Trades, Facilities Services from 1982 until 2022.

The family requests memorial donations be made to Chautauqua County Hospice and Palliative Care, 20 West Fairmount Avenue, Lakewood, NY 14750. Arrangements are by the McGraw-Kowal Funeral Home.

## ► Update Your Contact Information

- Have you moved, changed your email address or phone number? If so, please let us know so we can update the Emeritus database which is used for the quarterly newsletter and informational mailings. If you could help to reduce mailing costs by receiving the newsletter by email, please let us know. You may email [dawn.hunt@fredonia.edu](mailto:dawn.hunt@fredonia.edu) or call 716-673-3456.

► Emeritus Fall Luncheon—Clarion Hotel, October 13, 2022

